

teachers, and especially the parents, who make many sacrifices to provide their children the education offered in Catholic schools. The outstanding contributions of Catholic schools to our Nation are worthy of celebrating, and I offer heartfelt congratulations to all who participate in the work of Catholic education.

At present Catholic school student enrollment is almost 3 million students. Catholic schools welcome all students whose parents wish their children to attend.

Catholic Schools are proud of the diversity of their student body. Minority students, for example, comprise more than 24 percent of total enrollment, and nonCatholic students are approximately 14 percent of the enrollment nationwide.

Congratulations to the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Catholic Conference, the national organizations that sponsored the National Appreciation Day event on Capitol Hill. NCEA is the largest private professional education association in the world, representing more than 200,000 educators serving 7.6 million students at all levels of Catholic education.

The United States Catholic Conference is the national public policy organization of bishops in the United States. Congratulations to Catholic Schools, students, teachers, and parents. You are giving this Nation faith for a brighter future.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NAACP ON THE CELEBRATION OF ITS 90TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, sometimes known as the NAACP, as it celebrates its 90th anniversary on this Friday.

The NAACP is the oldest, largest, and strongest civil rights organization in the United States. On February 12, 1909, on the 100th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday, 60 prominent black and white citizens issued the call for a national conference in New York City to renew the struggle for civil and political liberty.

Participants at the conference agreed to work toward the abolition of forced segregation, promotion of equal education and civil rights under the protection of law, and an end to race violence. In 1911 that organization was incorporated as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Today the NAACP is a network of more than 2,200 branches covering all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Japan, Germany, and its membership exceeds a half million people. Born in response to racial violence, the asso-

ciation's first major campaign was the effort to get the anti-lynching laws on the books in the United States.

In 1919, to awaken the national conscience, the NAACP published an exhaustive review of lynching records. NAACP leaders, at potential risk to their own lives, conducted firsthand investigations of racially motivated violence that were widely publicized. Though bills succeeded in passing through the House of Representatives several times, they were always defeated in the Senate. Nonetheless, NAACP efforts brought an end to the excesses of mob violence through public exposure and the public pressure it mobilized.

The NAACP has always known how to respond to challenges, and is certainly no stranger to struggle. Through political pressure, marches, demonstrations, and effective lobbying, the NAACP has served as an effective voice, as well as a shield for minority Americans. From educational parity to voter registration, housing, and labor, the NAACP has been at the forefront of efforts aimed at securing civil rights and civil liberties. No longer do we see signs that read "white" and "colored." The voters' booth, the schoolhouse door, now swing open for everyone.

It is important for us to all remember how effective the NAACP efforts have been. While much has been accomplished, much more needs to be done. Mr. Speaker, America still needs the NAACP.

I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the national organization and all its local chapters as they celebrate their 90th anniversary on February 12. I wish them continued success as they continue to focus on the protection of civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans.

#### THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG FAIRNESS FOR SENIORS ACT OF 1999

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 45 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act of 1999. I want to thank my colleagues, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TURNER), and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), for coming up with this great idea to help correct a tremendous injustice in America today.

Our senior citizens pay over twice as much as citizens in other countries. They pay over twice as much as the preferred customers of the prescription drug manufacturers in this country, and it is simply not fair.

This chart demonstrates the way that our seniors are overcharged and the amount they are overcharged for their prescription medications. They are forced to make a choice between

food and medicine, between paying their rent and having medicine, between having utilities, having heat, and medicine. This is simply not right.

The First Congressional District of Arkansas, that I am so fortunate to represent, contains the most senior citizens of any Congressional District in this country that live only on social security. The cost of prescription medication is a tremendous burden for them. Yet, we allow them to continue to be overcharged by 40 and 50 and 60 and 70 percent.

They are overcharged by the most profitable companies in the world. These companies should be profitable. We are in favor of them being profitable. But that profit should not come at the expense of our senior citizens being forced to choose between food and the medicine it takes to keep them alive. When that happens, it becomes a moral issue. It becomes an issue that this Congress should address.

Our bill, the Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act of 1999, will reduce the cost of prescription medication for our seniors approximately 40 percent. Our seniors should not be at a disadvantage because they are citizens of the United States.

The average prescription price for Canadians is 72 percent less than it is for Americans. For Mexican citizens, it is 103 percent less than it is for Americans. This simply does not make any sense. If the prescription drug manufacturers that sell product in this country can sell it at other countries at much reduced rates, if they can sell it to our Federal Government at much reduced rates, these same prices should be available to our seniors. That is what this bill does.

One company last year raised the price of one of their medications 4,000 percent in one day. The Federal Trade Commission looked at this. They decided it was unfair and they filed a \$120 million recovery claim against this company. This is an outrageous attempt to make a profit.

The Prescription Drug Fairness for Seniors Act of 1999 will reduce those prices, as I have said, by 40 percent to most of our recipients. It is something we should do. It is the fair and right thing to do. It does not cost the Federal Government any money. This will simply make our seniors part of the largest purchasing pool in the world, and it will give them the ability to be dealt with fairly through their own local pharmacies.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. It is a good bill, and it is what we should do for our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY), for his leadership on this issue, and as well, my colleagues, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. TOM ALLEN), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. JIM TURNER),